

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. - 17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A medical device insertion apparatus, comprising:

a trocar;

an access tube disposed around the trocar, the access tube comprising a first sheath and a second sheath, the second sheath having a retention portion disposed at a distal end of the second sheath, the retention portion reconfigurable between a first configuration of reduced lateral extent and a second configuration of increased lateral extent by movement of the first sheath relative to the second sheath; and

an overtube disposed around the access tube and movable relative to the access tube;

wherein the overtube is adapted for insertion through a tissue wall and the overtube comprises at least one slot, and wherein, when the retention portion of the second sheath is in the second configuration of increased lateral extent, the retention portion is receivable within the at least one slot.

19. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the trocar includes a connector portion at a proximal end thereof and wherein the access tube includes a mating connector portion at a proximal end thereof, the connector portion couplable with the mating connector portion such that when coupled the trocar is rigidly joined to the access tube.

20. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the retention portion includes a first wing and a second wing.

21. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 20 wherein the overtube includes a first slot and a second slot and wherein, when the retention portion is in its second configuration of increased lateral extent, the first wing is receivable within the first slot and the second wing is receivable within the second slot.

22. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the overtube includes a retention portion disposed at a distal end of the overtube and wherein the retention portion of the overtube is reconfigurable between a first configuration of reduced lateral extent and a second configuration of increased lateral extent.

23. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the first sheath includes a connector and wherein the second sheath includes a connector, the connector of the first sheath couplable with the connector of the second sheath.
24. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 23 wherein the first sheath includes a second connector, the second connector of the first sheath disposed distally of the first connector of the first sheath, and wherein the second connector of the first sheath is couplable with the connector of the second sheath.
25. (Previously Presented) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the retention portion is configured in the second configuration of increased lateral extent by moving the second sheath distally with respect to the first sheath.
26. (Currently Amended) A method of inserting a medical device into a patient comprising the steps of:
 inserting a trocar and access tube through a body wall of the patient, wherein the trocar is disposed within the access tube and wherein a retention portion disposed at a distal end of the access tube is configured in a first configuration of reduced lateral extent;
 configuring the retention portion in a second configuration of increased lateral extent;
 inserting an overtube around the access tube and through the body wall, wherein the access tube is received within a central lumen of the overtube;
 advancing the overtube over the retention portion;
 configuring the retention portion in the first configuration of reduced lateral extent;
 withdrawing the trocar;
 withdrawing the access tube; and
 inserting the medical device within the central lumen of the overtube and through the body wall.
27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of coupling the trocar to the access tube prior to the step of inserting the trocar and access tube through a body wall of the patient.
28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein the access tube includes a first sheath and a second sheath and wherein the step of inserting the trocar and access tube through the body wall of the patient includes the steps of rigidly coupling the first sheath to the second sheath and rigidly coupling the trocar to the access tube.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein the access tube includes a first sheath and a second sheath and wherein the step of configuring the retention portion in a second configuration of increased lateral extent includes the step of moving the second sheath distally with respect to the first sheath.
30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein a retention portion is disposed at a distal end of the overtube and further comprising the step of configuring the retention portion of the overtube in a configuration of increased lateral extent after the step of inserting the overtube around the access tube and through the body wall.
31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein the medical device is a gastro-intestinal tube.
32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein the body wall includes an abdominal wall and a gastric wall.
33. (New) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the overtube has a distal end, and wherein the distal end is tapered.
34. (New) The medical device insertion apparatus of claim 18 wherein the overtube has a distal end, and wherein the distal end has a circumferential groove.